

Schramm says Cowboys heading 'back to basics'

By DENNE H. FREEMAN
An AP Sports Analysis

IRVING — The Dallas Cowboys are having their first volcanic upheaval in 26 years in the National Football League.

The fiery eruptions in the Cowboys' world matches the heat and molten lava in the stomach of Club President Texas E. Schramm.

He is admittedly the worst loser in the Western Hemisphere. However, the Cowboys haven't had a losing season since 1965.

But they've been adrift on some mediocre shoals since they played in their fifth and last Super Bowl in 1979.

"It's time to get back to basics," Schramm says. "We've lost track of what got us to the Super Bowl. We're

not getting worse but we're not getting better, either."

Dallas has been the NFL's most stable organization since 1960, its expansion year.

For decades it had the same owner, same general manager, same personnel director, and same coach. The only thing that changed was a few of the assistants and the players. Bum Bright bought out Clint Murchison a few years ago.

Now, a shakeup is rattling windows all over Valley Ranch, the Cowboys' new home.

Despite a 10-6 season, good enough for a National Conference Eastern Division title few experts thought the Cowboys could win, a 20-0 flogging by the Los Angeles Rams in the playoffs burned Dallas' pride.

Get ready to duck. Schramm is just as tough a competitor as Randy White only he doesn't have a helmet or shoulder pads.

"Tex is burning inside," says a Cowboys staffer. "The Rams' game

showed him changes were needed."

Certainly, not a head coach — Tom Landry needs no introduction or second-guessing. He was one of the leading contenders for NFL Coach of the Year for the job he did.

Schramm made some suggestions, then let Landry decide what to do.

Suddenly, Paul Hackett, who fine-tuned Bill Walsh's offense at San Francisco, was hired as quarterback coach to replace Jim Shofner.

Shofner caught a plane to St. Louis to join secondary coach Gene Stallings, who left to take the head coaching job with the St. Louis Cardinals.

If you're counting, that's five Landry assistants who are now head coaches in the NFL.

Offensive line coach Jim Meyers announced he will retire at 65 after one more season. Landry could hire his replacement soon to work with the Cowboys for a year.

Then Schramm sliced in half the duties to be performed by Vice President Gil Brandt, who no longer will be in charge of players' contracts.

Brandt will zero in on college scouting, period.

The new man will handle contracts and evaluate pro talent for possible trades. Schramm should name the "pro personnel director" probably sometime in March.

Poor performance in the NFL draft in the 1980s made Schramm decide that Brandt was stretched too thin. Passing over such All-Pro players as Dan Marino and Howie Long led Schramm to his conclusions.

There could be some major trades like dishing off unhappy quarterback Gary Hogeboom, but the Cowboys are committed to regaining their reputation as the shrewdest judges of talent in the NFL.

"Getting players by trades is overly exaggerated," Schramm says. "We're a different animal than baseball. Clubs don't often give up anything but bad players in the NFL. We've got to put our emphasis back on the draft."

The Cowboys haven't drafted a Pro Bowl player in the 1980s.

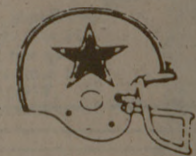
They've had so many recent drafting disasters they've lost a lot of luster.

"When the NFL moved the draft from January to April we lost our edge on everybody," Schramm says. "Now everybody has the same information we do and we've made some mistakes."

There's never been a shakeout with the silver and blue like the one that has begun at the Cowboys' working ranch.

The Cowboys' success turned them into fancy dudes. Now, they want to be real Cowboys in the Super Bowl again.

Ol' trail boss "Tex" will see to it. You can hear the bullwhip crackling now.



Mavs bury Nuggets in late rally

Associated Press

DALLAS — Sam Perkins scored six of his 17 points during a 12-2 Dallas run late in the fourth period and Rolando Blackman scored 25 points Wednesday night as the Mavericks defeated the Denver Nuggets 117-110.

Dallas, trailing 100-96 after a Bill Hanzlik basket with 6:33 remaining, got a three-point play from James Donaldson, a layup by Perkins, two free throws by Derek Harper and two more by Perkins to open a 105-100 lead.

After a jump shot by T.R. Dunn cut the Mavericks' edge to three points, Perkins hit two more free throws to extend the lead back to five.

The Nuggets never drew closer than four points the rest of the way.

Dallas, winners of three straight and eight of nine, got 20 points from Jay Vincent and 18 from Mark Aguirre in improving its record to 27-22.

Denver, which lost center Wayne Cooper with a torn calf muscle early in the first period, was led by Alex English and Danny Schayes with 19 points each.

Kings say Celtics 'human'

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Boston Celtics were mumbling about missed opportunities as the Sacramento Kings savored a strange string of Tuesday night home victories.

"We missed the open shots and they didn't," Celtics forward Larry Bird said after Boston's winning

streak was ended at 13 games by a 105-100 King's victory.

Open shots were not all the Celtics missed. Bird blew two free throws with 31 seconds left and the lowly Kings leading 101-98.

"I'm not used to missing those shots in that situation," said Bird. "We didn't deserve to win tonight."

Sacramento guard Mike Woodson said the Celtics are "only human. You can't expect these guys to hit .500 all the time."

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